

THE
POOR MAN'S FRIEND;

OR,

A Farmer's Meditations

ON

RELIGION and MORALS;

From Particular Passages of the Old and New
Testament.

THE SECOND EDITION.

By a Well-wisher to his King and Country.

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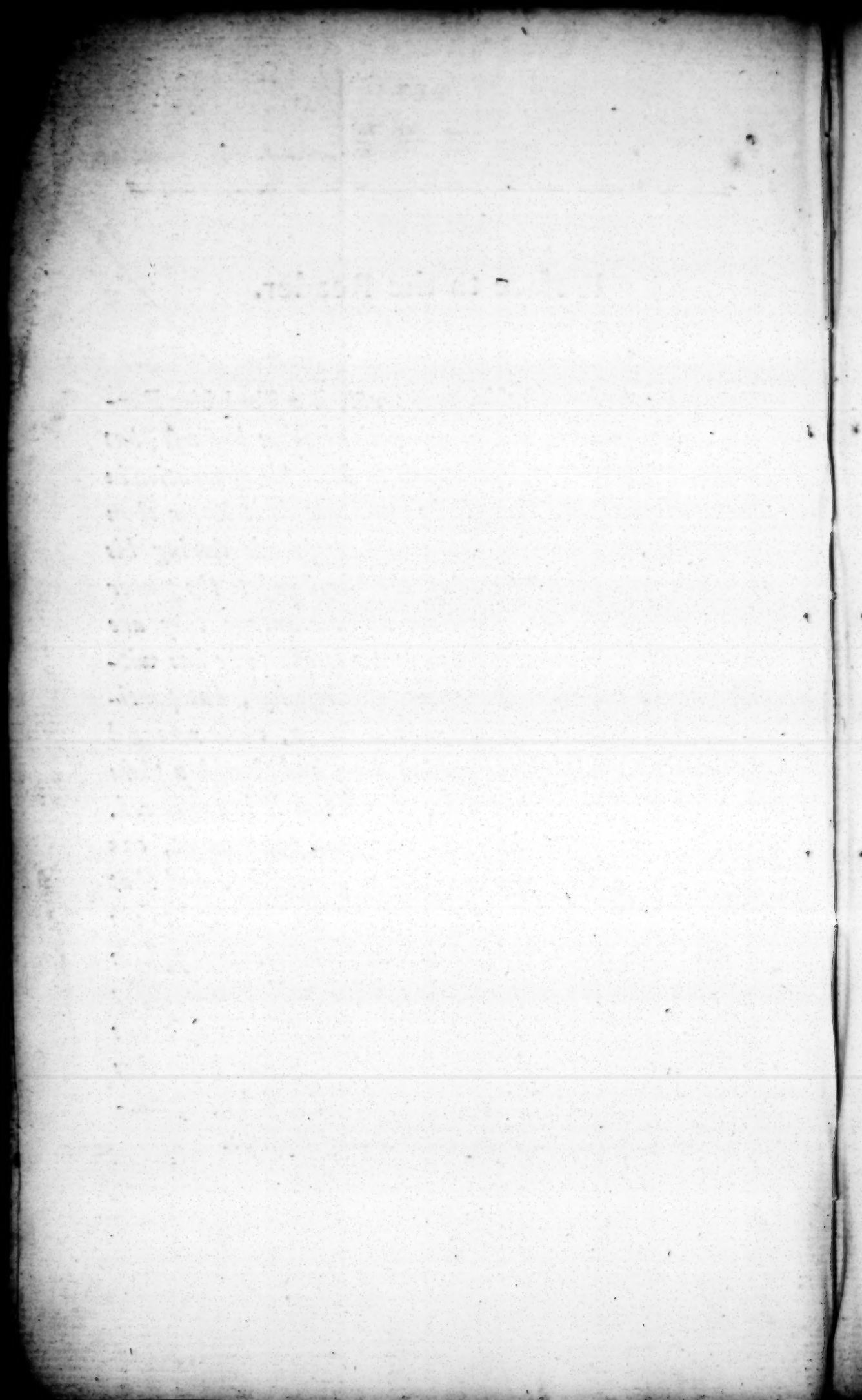
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WILLIAM

Preface to the Reader.

THE *Author of this small tract, is a Yorkshire Farmer, who some time ago retired from business; but judging it the duty of every man to serve his generation in some way or other, thought he could not do it better than by offering the following Observations (made during his excursions to different parts of the kingdom) to the poorer classes of society, for whose use and advantage they are more especially intended: the melancholy effects he has witnessed in the morals and æconomy of these last, but particularly in the education of their children, rank amongst the leading motives of his present step; and though a plain and unlettered man, he trusts, that when it is considered, that the fabric of social order and good government, can only stand in the basis of religion and morality, and that it is principally in defence of these he has ventured to use his pen; the critic and scholar will make every possible allowance for the imperfections with which this Essay abounds. One word more:—the authorities he uses are chiefly from the Sacred Volume; and he therefore hopes they will meet with that serious consideration, which every candid and reasonable mind must allow they deserve.*



A FEW
REMARKS
ON PARTICULAR PASSAGES OF THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Acts xxvi. 28.

IN this chapter we have the apostle Paul's apology and defensive plea which he makes for himself against those blind Jews, who did so maliciously persecute him before Agrippa, Festus, Bernice, and the council; in which plea he doth chiefly insist upon those things: the manner of his life before conversion—the manner of his conversion—and the manner of his life after conversion: How he lived before conversion, he tells us from vers. 4 to 18. How God wrought on him to conversion, he tells us from verse 13 to 18. How he lived after conversion, he tells us verse 19 to 23. Before conversion, he was very pharisaical. The manner of his conversion was very wonderful. The fruits of his conversion were very remarkable. Before conversion, he persecuted the gospel which others preached: After conversion, he preached the gospel which he himself had persecuted. While he was a persecutor of the gospel, the Jews loved him: But when

by the grace of God, he was become a preacher of the gospel, the Jews hated and sought to kill him. He was once against Christ, and then many were for him ; but when he was for Christ, all were against him : He preached no treason, he sowed no sedition ; only he preached repentance and faith in Christ, and the resurrection, and for this he was called in question.

Festus seems to censure him, verse 24, saying, *Much learning doth make thee mad !* Agrippa seems to be convinced by him, verse 28, *The whole bench seems to acquit him !* Verse 30 and 31, Agrippa seems so affected with his plea, that he said, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian !* I hope I need not tell you what a Christian is : for as one that embraces the doctrine of Arminius, is called an Arminian ; and as one that owns the doctrine of Luther, is called a Lutheran ; and as he that worships Mahomet, is called a Mahometan ; so he that embraces and owns, and follows the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and professes Christ came in the flesh, is called a Christian. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch ; Acts, chap. xi. verse 26. The Heathens and Jews will not own Christ ; and the Mahometan prefers Mahomet above Christ, and makes the name to be a name of reproach among them ; and so usually abuse the word Christian, to signify a fool. But the apostle faith, the preaching of Christ, is to the world foolishness. Then it is no wonder that the disciples of Christ are the world's fools ! Yet, it is true, (in a sound sense) that so they are, for the whole of Godliness is a mystery. A man must die that would
live ;

live; and he must have nothing, that would have all things; the dead works must rise, or else preaching is in vain.

If any man among you seem to be wise, let him become a fool to the world, that he may be wise in Christ. To make a man a true Christian, there must be light in the head, and heat in the heart; sorrow when we do amiss, and rejoicing when we do the thing that is just and right. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; Matt. chap. vii. verse 21. That is, not every one that makes a profession of Christ, shall be ordained for a true disciple of Christ. To profess Christ, is to own him when all deny him; to confess Christ, is to plead for him; and suffer for him when others oppose him. Hypocrites may be professors, but the martyrs are the true confessors. What a goodly profession had Judas; he followed Christ, left all for Christ, he preached the gospel of Christ; he ate and drank at the table of Christ, he cast out devils in the name of Christ,—and was then himself cast out.

The young man in the gospel, Matt. chap. xix. verse 16, who came to Christ to learn of him the way to heaven, said, *Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Our Lord tells him, if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He answers, Lord, all these have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? He was not like the morning dew, that passes away, as Ephraim, Hosea, chap. vi. verse 4. But he had obeyed all the commands, and

wanted to be further instructed. Jesus said to him, if thou wilt be perfect, go, and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me, and take up thy cross: And he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions; which seemed to hinder him from becoming a disciple.

The parable of the Virgins, Matt. chap. xxi. verse 1. See what a progress they make, and how far they go in a profession of Christ. Virgin, is a name given in the Old and New Testament to the saints of Christ. The one hundred and forty and four thousand that stood with the Lamb, on Mount Sion, are called Virgins, because they are not defiled with corruptions, that are in the world through lust, Rev. chap. xiv. verse 4. These seem to be of that sort, for they are called Virgins; they take their lamps: that is, they made a profession of that they joined themselves to; those who had joined themselves to the Lord; to the wise Virgins. They went forth to meet the Bridegroom; this speaks out, their owning and seeking after Christ. They said, give us of your oil; that seems a desire of grace. But not true, because, untimely, unsound, and as being unseasonable, it was too late; their folly was in not taking oil when they took their lamps; they should have sought for their oil of grace, when they took up their profession: It was too late to seek it at the coming of the Bridegroom: so they were shut out; and though they cried for entrance, Lord, Lord, open unto us; yet the Lord tells them, I know you not. Watch, for they, like the Sodomites, perish, with their hands upon the very threshold of glory. I
hope

hope all that are professors of the gospel of Christ, will stand and tremble. For if such as those fall short of heaven, and be but *almost* Christians; what are we? Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. A man may tremble, and yet be but almost a christian. The word of God can make the stoutest sinner in the world shake and tremble; for Belshazzar trembled, at the hand-writing on the wall; Felix trembled, when Paul preached of righteousness and judgment; and the devils believe, and tremble, yet are but devils still: but on the broken and contrite spirit that trembles for sin, and poverty of spirit, and is low in his own eyes, our God will look. A man may hate some sin, and yet be but almost a christian. Absalom hated a man's uncleanness with his sister Tamer, and slew him for it; yet Absalom was a wicked man. A man of pride and prodigality may hate covetousness, and not from a principle of grace, but from the contrariety of lust. A man may make great vows and promises, and resolve against his sins, and yet be but almost a christian. Saul said, return my son David, I will no more do thee harm; and Pharoah said, I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice to the Lord: and yet Saul and Pharoah both perished in their sins, as appears. Troubles and affliction may provoke us to large promises against sin, for the future, and amendment of life; but we should be careful to perform in prosperity, and health, what we promise in adversity, or when sick. A man may have strife, against sin in himself, as the lust of
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the flesh against the spirit, (of Christ.) Balaam said, how shall I curse, when God hath not cursed ; or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied. And Pilate said to the Jews, shall I crucify your King : what evil hath he done ? I am innocent of the blood of that just man. The Scribes and Pharisees are said to have resisted the spirit ; a man may delight to hear the word of God, and yet be but almost a christian. It is said of the stony ground, it received the word with joy, Matt. chap. xiii. verse 20. So saith God of them in Ezek. chap. xxxiii. verse 32. They delight to hear my words, but they do them not. A man may delight in the word, more because of the eloquence of the preacher than the truth delivered. David says, he is a blessed man that delights in the law of the Lord ; and in that law, doth meditate, both day and night. He that delights in the word, because of its spirituality, which flows from grace, and the mind renewed and enlightened, and the affections made heavenly—then a man is a christian ; but in the church on earth, the wheat, and the chaff, lie in the same heap together. Cain had communion with Abel, Ishmael dwelt in the same house with Isaac, Judas was in fellowship with the apostles, and so was Demas with the rest of the disciples. The draw net of the gospel catches bad fish as well as good ; and tares and the wheat grow together ; and it will be so till the harvest.

In the church of the first-born, that is, in heaven, there is no hypocrisy ; but the spirits of just men made perfect. The chaff is separated to unquenchable fire.

A man may be very zealous in form of religion, and be but almost a christian. There is a superstitious zeal usually found in men unconverted. Paul was exceeding zealous of the tradition of his fathers. Chap. i. chap. xiv. &c. But when Paul was convinced, his zeal was actuated by other principles. The Scribes and Pharisees had an outward zeal, they would not eat with unwashen hands, yet would live in unseen sins. Jehu was a mighty outside reformer, 2. K. chap. x. v. 16. There is a blind zeal; but not according to knowledge, Rev. chap. x. verse 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service, I. chap. xvi. verse 2. The Pharisees were diligent tithers of mint, annise, and commin; but neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.

It is good to be zealously affected in good things, G. chap. iv. verse 11. That zeal is a celestial fire, the true temper and heat of all the affections to God, and Christ; it is a zeal wrought and kindled in the soul, by the spirit of God, who first works it, and then sets it on work. It is a zeal that hath the scriptures, and word of God, for its guide: directing it in working both in regard of its object and end. It is a zeal that checks sin, and forwards the heavenly life, and the concernment of God's glory; but God hath no glory from that zeal that hath no scripture warrant. The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up, J. chap. ii. verse 17. A man may pray much, and be but almost a christian. Christ said, this people draw nigh unto me with their mouths, and
honor

honor me with their lips; but their hearts are far from me, M. chap. xv. verse 8. Also ye devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore they shall receive the greater damnation, M. chap. xxiii. verse 14. Christ went and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Those prayers that are from the working and sighing of God's spirit in us, from a sense of our own emptiness, and God's infinite fullness, with a sincere heart lifted up to God, are acceptable. A man may have the spirit of God for a time, and be but almost a Christian. Judas had the spirit: behold a company of prophets met Saul, and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them, 1. Sam. chap. x. verse 10. The hypocrite may have the spirit for a season, but not to abide in him; by conviction, but not by conversion. If a man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, R. chap. viii. verse 9. That is, the spirit of adoption, the spirit of bondage, is an operation of the Holy Ghost, by the law convincing the conscience of sin and death, and of the curse of the law; and working in the soul such an apprehension of the wrath of God as makes the thought of God a terror; yet many receive the spirit of bondages, that do not receive the spirit of adoption. Simon Magus had common faith, yet was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. But Simon Peter had saving faith; that is, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. There is an internal and external worship of God. The internal acts of worship of God, are to love God, and to fear God,

God, to delight in God, to trust in God; and the external acts of worshipping, are by praying, teaching, and hearing, which make almost a Christian; but the internal make altogether a Christian. So every man that would be saved eternally, must enter in at the strait gate. It is not strait in Christ's part, which is good to be observed; but strait to our lusts and corruptions, even to flesh and blood. Converting grace is free; the gate of mercy stands open, all the day long. If any man will, let him take the water of life freely, without money or price. Grace is not an herb that grows in nature's garden; for the heart of man is deceitful, and desperately wicked.

In the days of Shamger, the son of Amak, the highways were unoccupied, the travellers walked through crooked ways; the unclean, and the lion, and the ravenous beast, are in the crooked way, where many walk; but the redeemed of the Lord walk in the ways of the Lord. In the old covenant administration, God wrote his laws upon tables of stone; but in the new administration and covenant of the gospel, God wrote them in the fleshly tables of the heart, that there might be a law within, answerable to the law without. Every believer hath a light within him, not guiding him to despise and flight, but to prize and walk by the light without. The word commands him to walk in the light, and the light directs him to walk according to the word. Obedience and conformity to God become the choice and delight of the soul, for holiness is the nature of the new Creator: the whole heart is renewed, and will keep close to God in his ways; but he that

prevaricates, that is, an hypocrite, will fall therein. When Christ found the fig-tree that had leaves, and not fruit, he pronounced the curse of barrenness upon it—*Never fruit grow on thee more!* Matt. chap. xxi. verse 19. You that grow weak in a profession, and so fall away, begin in the spirit, and make a sad end in the flesh. Some are hearers of the word, but not doers of it, and so deceive their own souls; some neither hear nor do—those are profane sinners; some both hear the word, and do it—those are true believers of Christ. There is no calling so gainful as religion, and the merchant that trades in this wisdom, and understanding, will prove the richest man. It is the most profitable employment we can take up; godliness is profitable unto all things, having a promise of this life, and of that which is to come, Tim. chap. iv. verse 8. Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding, Job, chap. xxviii. verse 28. There is one thing needful, that is, the grace of Jesus Christ in the heart; have this and have all; want this and want all. The things of this world are useful in their places, and we ought to praise God for them, who sends them for our good, the support of our families, and the help of our poor neighbours: which are good to be observed, though not to set our hearts on. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are all that are in the world, 1 I. chap. ii. verse 19. Indeed, pleasures, honor, and profit, are much in fashion; yet worldly comforts are fading, and the triumphing of the wicked is but short. Solomon compares it to the crackling of thorns under a pot, Eccle.

Eccle. chap. vii. verse 6. which is but a blaze, and soon goes out. But godliness is durable, an abiding comfort, and a glass where a man may see what he is. Your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you, John, chap. xvi. verse 22. Good men are not all spirit, and no flesh; all grace, and no sin: There is light and darkness in the same mind, the flesh lusting against the spirit, G. chap. v. verse 17. I find, then, a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, Rom. chap. vii. verse 21. neglecting the thing I love, and doing the thing I hate. I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, bringing me captive to the law of sin, Rom. chap. vii. verse 23. Hard censure and backbiting, is a reigning sin amongst most people, even devout and serious men, which is contrary to charity; we should always incline to think the best of others, and the worst of ourselves; and to lean as far as we can to the weak side, and speak the best we can of them behind their backs, and the worst to their faces. We should not abuse God's patience, who gives us time to repent; but resign ourselves freely to God's service, before death snatch us away by force; and raise our souls above the world, by making spiritual objects familiar to them, and to die daily to those things the world most esteems nourishment to the soul: without such, we can no more maintain our spiritual life, than we can our temporal without eating and drinking. Sacrament is a knot to tie, or an outward sign of the inward and spiritual grace; the Lord's Supper is a daily nourishment from the Lord, by a heart-breaking power,

it revives our spirits, and strengthens them as natural bread doth the body: This inward strength is that bread to the soul that our Lord spake of in St. John, chap. vi. verse 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. Verse 63, says, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life. Verse 33, Jesus said, the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world. Verse 34, Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. The kingdom of God doth not consist in meat and drink, and such like external things; but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which are eternal precepts. Verse 48, Jesus said, I am that bread of life: all good men desire to taste of this heavenly refreshing bread. Christ died for all, his blood washed for all, he tasted death for all, and gives a measure of his grace to all.

What is that Jordan, that John baptized in? Jor is a river, and Dan is judgement. He dipped them in the river of judgement; but now John is deceased and Christ is increased, and baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, and burns up the chaff with unquenchable fire; who comes with his fan, and purges his floor, and gathers his wheat unto his garner: That wheat is the seed of God, which must lie with the chaff, until cleansed by Christ; he ministers grace, and truth, and faith, and the heavenly riches of light, and power, and strength, and brings us to the waters and springs of life, and glory, holiness, and godliness; likewise mediates
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and makes intercession for us to God, that we may pass to God through him who is able to save to the uttermost. He also trains up and disciplines his soldiers to keep their ranks in righteousness, with the heavenly armour, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. He said in St. John, chap. v. verse 39, Search the scriptures, for in them you have eternal life, and they are they that testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye may have life. The marks of a true Christian, are, to love one another, and to add to our faith, virtue; to our virtue, knowledge, which knowledge is, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal; and to our knowledge, to add temperance; and to our temperance, add patience, for that runs the race, and obtains the crown of life; and to patience add godliness; in that, brotherly kindness is known. Buy the truth, and sell it not: Try the spirits whether they be of God or not. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit; conscience, is what we call the grace of God; and if we do nothing against our conscience, we are lead by the spirit of God. Let God have our first awaking thoughts reverently in the morning, and last at night; as God is every where present, we should study to be every where holy, as becomes a Christian. We should not sit down to our food, as a beast does to his fodder, but praise the giver of all good things. A tree is known by its fruit; do men gather grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles?

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He that says, keep holy the sabbath-day, says also, six days shalt thou labour : We ought to labour, either in body or mind. If a good man be careful to keep a thief out of his house, surely he will be as careful to keep Satan from robbing him of his precious soul ; but there is not much bustle in the way of the life to come. Sins against ourselves are, Pride ; it is too high a conceit of ourselves, and contempt of others. Vain-glory, is assuming too much, in setting off our own praise, and the desire to be praised by others. Ambition, is a restless pursuit of honours and places ; when ambition leads the van, the whole body of vice follows ; pride is the parent of iniquity, the inventor of vice, the seed of rebellion, the rise of faction ; pride lost mankind, these, Paradise ; the world, its first and innocent peace, and made a devil of an angel : Pride, joined with many virtues, choaks them all. It is a shame for a Christian to be proud. Haughtiness is a scornful carriage, or commanding others. Worldliness is an over-eager care of worldly things ; as gluttony, voluptuousness, reveling, adultery, fornication, sensuality, or a care to gratify our bodily senses, and fleshly lusts, and appetites ; also drunkenness, and covetousness, which much resemble. For the more a man drinks, the more he thirsts ; and the more a man hath, the more he coveteth ; yet they despise each other very much. The drunkard says, if I had what he hath, I would live like a man : And the miser says, it is well, that I do not spend my money like this sottish fool : but observe :

That the miser's a fool, and so is he
That spends his wealth in prodigality.

Sins

Sins against God, are, atheism, denying providence, blasphemy, superstition, doing things we know will offend him ; sins against our brethren, are, injustice, murder, false witness, slander, oppression, unfaithfulness, or breach of promise, circumvention, or going beyond our brethren, uncharitableness, &c. To delight in mischief, despising them that are good, giving scandal to weak brethren, &c. laying in their way an occasion of sin, suffering false stains to stick upon them, when it is in our power to vindicate them, back-biting them, railing, upbraiding them with our kindness, mocking them for their infirmities, affronting them, putting the worst sense on what is said or done by others ; speaking evil of dignities, making division and faction, contention, heresy, i. e. obstinacy, schism, sacrilege, and tumults. If we desire to enjoy our religious and civil rights, and to call what we have, our own, and to set every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, and that none shall make us afraid, we must pray for faithful and good subjects, and a quiet world ; and add our honest endeavours to promote the great ends we pray for. For righteousness will exalt a nation, but sin will be the reproach and ruin of a people. If we rock our consciences asleep in a cradle of duties, or a form of religion, it will be a great hazard whether or not that we awake till death or judgment. Reason tells us, that all travellers do travel in winter as well as summer, in cold as well as heat, in storms as well as calms ; we travel at home as well as abroad ; and this life is but a travel, and we should have our eye on our journey's

journey's end ; to serve the Lord with a clean heart and humble spirit, always desiring God to assist us, and not to rely on our own strength, but trusting in Jesus Christ, believing that he is come the second time into the world, to work in our hearts by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is a greater blessing than if he had lived amongst us in his own person, for he could have been but at one place at once among us, but his spirit is every where at the same time. Be careful of turning to evil, but persevere in that which is good, for it is that which makes a death-bed soft and sweet, and gives a power to hold out a profession under sufferings ; some will seem religious and go briskly on with it, when religion is in flourishing times ; and many people cry hallelujah, as they go along ; but turn when persecution comes—they can travel in calms, but not in storms, as the true travellers, either spiritual or temporal, do ; true religion was scarcely ever at a lower ebb, than at present, in my opinion ; for sinful men cannot do with religion, nor without religion ; we cannot serve God and Mammon. The other world ought to have our minds, though this world have our bodies. Isaiah, chap. xxvi. verse 9, When the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. A man will not refuse a bitter medicine for his health : trouble, and afflictions, seem medicine for the soul ; those that are sick, know the blessings of health, and those that are in war, know the blessings of a peace. Proverbs, chap. xx. verse 27, says, The spirit of a man is a candle of the Lord. A candle is of no use
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till lighted by fire, as it was the intention of the Holy Ghost, to preserve our bodies from the defilements of lust; so it was to raise and exalt the moral perfection of our minds, and to reduce our inclinations and affections all under subjection to our religion and our reason, so that in our lives we might bring forth the fruits of the spirit—love, joy, peace, goodness, and meekness. The less religion there is in the world, the worse all affairs will go in it: Piety, and virtue, and temperance, advance the strength, and establish the reputation and interest of nations; but by vice, and luxury, they tumble down, and become an easy conquest to their neighbours. But what is most remarkable, and deserving the most serious consideration, is, that nothing makes death appear so terrible as the want of religion, nor fills men so much with fear about the future state, as their having made no provision for death, all the time of their life. If a man could purchase to himself the empire of Augustus, or the riches of Cæsar, the pleasures of Solomon, the policy of Aitchifell, the gay apparel of Dives,—and lose his own soul, what would it profit him? seeing every man enters into this life in tears, passeth it with trouble, and often ends it with sorrow; the flesh warring against the spirit, and the passions against reason. Job seemed nearer heaven, in his trouble and adversity, than he was, in his prosperity and riches. I think we should open our hearts with humility, that the King of Glory might come in. A man of taste dwells on such thoughts, as raises his admiration for God's goodness, and makes a paradise of

the earth, and the good things we enjoy in this life. Earthly matters minister heavenly meditations to a heavenly mind. A good man will fall out of earthly talk into heavenly. We are commanded to enter in at the strait gate ; it is not strait on Christ's part, which is good to be observed ; but strait to our lusts and corruptions, even to flesh and blood. In the narrow way, there is room for body and soul ; but not room for body and soul and a sinful course of life. A good man may look backwards with pleasure, and forwards, even to Abraham's bosom. Salvation is promised on the terms of faith, obedience, and repentance ; faith to believe, and obedience to perform ; and repentance is a change of the heart, from an evil to a good disposition of the mind : when that change is made, repentance is complete by the life being amended : The mind cannot long sustain great afflictions, without the body being disordered thereby. Gal. chap. v. verse 19, The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, strife, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like, which, it is said, shall not enter ; but the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance ; against such there is no law. It is a great disgrace to a Christian to eat or drink more at a time than nature requires ; for we cannot force a brute beast to eat or drink more than nature requires. Likewise, drinking to an excess, casts the passions and lusts of the flesh on a fire, and disqualifies our spirits for the world's business, and the service

service of God, and does not answer the end of our creation, which was, to live soberly and righteously. Some sins cool by reason of old age ; but drunkenness demands frequent recruits, to keep up the spirits in old age ; and perhaps some may drink wine to lull conscience asleep ; but it is good to take care that we do not shut the book of an evil conscience against ourselves : For the book of conscience will be opened at the last day : the pleasure of sin, be of what kind it will, cannot compare with the troubles of the conscience, much more to the torments of hell for ever and ever. A man that leads a drunken, lewd, vicious, wicked life, and keeps his conscience at home, may envy a beast that perisheth without knowledge or thought of death or any future state.

Be careful to keep your heart, for out of it are the issues of life. It is said, that the heart is the first part of a man that lives, and the last that dies : So the heart is the fountain of life, and of sin. Sin is first conceived in the heart, then brought forth unto the world by steps and degrees ; some are so vain that they delight in the company of sin, and so marry to a sinful course of life, and never leave it off till death them parts. Although they will not obey God's commands in their life-time, yet *one* command they must obey at their death : " Depart from me, ye cursed." It is better to turn from our sins in health and prosperity, than to be turned by some judgment ; but turn us good Lord, and so we shall be turned. The raven kept to the ark when there was no other place of safety ; but

when the flood abated, the dove forsook it; so it is good to perform in health and prosperity, what we promise in sickness and adversity. If thou promise to do good, do it to-day, for yesterday is gone, and to-morrow is none of ours. A man's life is a road, or a turn of the wheel of life, that turns some off every day; through this world, is the way to heaven; and most men would take heaven in their way at last, but will not take up their cross to the world, and their fleshly lusts here. Be wise to that which is good, and harmless to that which is evil; or as wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves; then God will be our tower, and rock of defence, in time of our trouble and adversity, to fly to for safety. Do by men as you would have men to do by you, for that is the law and the prophets, and the golden rule of equity. Seek no revenge, but overcome evil with good; make peace with God, and keep it with all men; charity and chastity keep a pure soul in a pure body. Without Christ we can do nothing, our sufficiency is of God; prudence makes us wary in all our actions, fortitude overcomes the difficulty of temptations, justice gives to all their due, as God requires; temperance moderates our appetites and desires; keep faith, hope, and charity, with the words of Christ, that made strange convictions, and turned finners to saints. A broken and a contrite heart is the sacrifice the Lord loves.

This is the best religion, that gives evidence of an immortal life: A man that is ruled by the Messiah's standard, lives and walks by faith, and hopes that he will

will be happy hereafter, and does not trust all, but receives a great deal of spiritual comfort that the wicked know not of. Faith is substance of things hoped for, and evidence of things not seen; Seneca advises to examine at night the actions of the day, and if you have done evil, be troubled, and if good, rejoice. A variety of trifles in this life are daily breaking in upon us, and hurrying us away into forgetfulness of God and ourselves; but how much soever we may be careful or encumbered about this world, there is one thing needful: all business is consistent with the duties of religion, provided we govern our affairs by christian principles. Let us make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations. Those words signify to be charitable, for he that gives to the poor, lends to the Lord, and is to receive seven-fold, either in this world, or the next; and we are to send up our alms, and to do good in this life. One was answered, that did not so, "Depart, for I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; and thirsty, and ye gave me no drink." We should pity the Heathens and Mahometans, under their darkness and errors; but how much more deplorable is the case of those who dwell in Emanuel's land, and turn the valley of vision into the land of darkness and the shadow of death; yet still would be counted great wits, but their wisdom is buried with them. The first miracle Christ wrought, was in Canaan of Galilee, where he turned water into wine, shewing he will sweeten the difficulties of a married state if we live as
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we ought; and he will turn the water of sorrow into the wine of content and joy. But if we let honors, riches, and pleasures have the first place in our hearts, such chiefly seek first the kingdom of this world, and not the kingdom of God, as is commanded. Instead of inviting Christ to the marriage, they forbid him, so he hath reason to fear punishment. Buying and selling, marrying, and giving in marriage, may prove hurtful, though they are lawful. If we do not persevere according to the Messiah's standard, we ought not to place our happiness on any thing in this lower world: If I place my happiness on a wife, death may take her away; and if I place them on mirth, and the pleasantest delights this world can afford, when death overtakes us, they will vanish like a dream, and leave us like Balaam's ass: And if we place them on riches, crowns, or kingdoms, we must leave them to our heirs. Let us place our happiness in heaven, where rust, or moths, cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. St. Matt. chap. xvi. verses 16, 17, and 18, Peter said, thou art Christ; Christ said, flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee; thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church. So I believe it was the rock of the spirit, Christ meant. St. Paul said, the God of peace fill you with all joy in believing; no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, a supernatural light, or a light which our natural powers are incapable of giving us. Heb. chap. viii, verse 10, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their inward parts; I will be to them a God, and they shall

shall be to me a people. Psalm iv. verse 10, Be still, and know that I am God. 1 Cor. chap. ii. verses 9 and 10, it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. Some preach the everlasting gospel unto all, Christ nigh all, the light in all, and the seed sown in the hearts of all; the kingdom of power come, and the kingdom of glory at hand. God gives us that peace which passeth all understanding, a peace that this world cannot give nor take away. Keep close to the spirit of Christ and the scriptures, for I think it is not proper to bewilder ourselves with disputes, for the management of a dispute is not a good man's talent: turn not from one profession to another, but turn from evil to good. Pride, idleness, and evil company are the parents of many vices; anger and envy seldom make things better, but often much worse:—Remember the example of Christ, who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not: whose command is, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you, and abuse you; so that none should render evil for evil to any man, but overcome evil with good. Envy destroys in man, the love of God, and our neighbours, and fills the world with innumerable mischiefs: It brought Cain to kill his brother, and the Jews our Saviour; but still, envy and sin are often overtaken in
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this world ; for pride, Haman built a gallows to hang Mordecia on, and was executed thereon himself, and Mordecia greatly advanced, but still sat at the King's gate, not proud, as Haman was. God Almighty gave Gideon, with 300 men, that lapt like dogs, the victory over Median and his host, that lay in the vallies like grafshoppers. Through God we shall do valiantly, it is him that treadeth down our enemies ; but without him an army cannot change the colour of the skies, nor make it rain in our necessity, nor make it cease from raining, nor make the wind to blow, nor cease from blowing, nor cannot make a flower of the field to grow, nor make the vilest worm that creeps, and give it being. The Moorish lady, when she came from Arabia to these christian countries with her expected husband, prudently refused to be baptized until she was instructed in the articles of the christian faith. The Turks, whom we call Infidels, go to their public devotions five times a day ; and shall they not rise in judgment against us Christians, that cannot afford to pray two or three times a day ? It is a mercy that heaven is not like brass, and the earth like iron ; it is a mercy that the scripture was preserved ; it is a mercy that we live, move, and have our being ; it is a mercy we are not sick of both body and mind. What nation or people is there at this day, that God hath bestowed so many mercies on as England ? The Lord hath not only given us his gospel, but also peace, and plenty of all things : we ought to praise his glorious name, least he be pleased to unsheath his sword upon us. Self-interest sways too much ;

much; and if a door be but open to get riches, how we do thrust and throng! all striving to be before each other. It would be well for us if we would strive as much to be before each other in praising and glorifying God; but the time will come which good men wish for, and those may fear who prefer the slavery of sin before the service of God, and his Christ. Our hearts should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, or house of prayer; God forbid that we should make our hearts a den of thieves, or temple of a harlot, and a place to conceive sin in; but keep pure and holy, and pray the father that he may send another comforter, even the spirit of truth. Dying young is a good death: To be taken from our work at noon, and then to receive a day's wages; nay, perhaps to continue late at night, to work out the salvation with fear and trembling.

In the 2d of Chronicles, chap. xv. verse 2, it is said, the Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. In war, and troublesome times, you can almost come into no company, but they are talking of your enemies abroad; but I fear our greatest enemies are at home, in our own corruptions; so in my opinion, the best remedy in those troublesome times is, for every man and woman to mend one, and to begin this reformation with a sincere heart and goodwill from this day, and repent, and turn ourselves from all our transgressions; so that iniquity shall not be our ruin. If props be taken from an old house, it must fall; so if equity, and justice, and peace, and good

nature be taken from us, we fall : For justice is the pillar on which States and Kingdoms stand ; remove that, and the temple of government and good order will fall. Is it not strange to see some men blind like Sampson, and like him, full of revenge, pulling down pillars, though they themselves were sure to be overwhelmed as well as others, in the ruins of the buildings, and lose their lives by the bargain ? St. Paul tells us, that wicked men, through the fears of death, are all their life-time subject to bondage. Heb. chap. ii. verse 15. For true piety hath the promises of this life, and that which is to come. Christ gives us this holy and safe advice—Seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all those things shall be added unto you, Matt. chap. vi. verse 33. At the reckoning day, he will be the wisest man that has laid out his time in good duties, and his treasure in good works ; I also think contentment to be the truest riches, and covetousness the greatest poverty : He is not rich that hath much, but he that has enough ; and that man is poor that covets more, and yet wants a heart to enjoy what he has already.

When we die, our heirs give us nothing of all our substance, but a winding-sheet, and a coffin : so there is nothing to go along with us but our good deeds, and our bad ones, unto the world to come. So now, my friends, if you have an humble regard to the word of the living God, I am certain I need say no more ; and if you have not, all my attempts would be fruitless ; so I hope the few parables I have laid before you, may be a blessing
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and seasonable advice to set the Lord always before your faces, in consideration of the judgment to come, and the strictness of that judgment : it highly concerns us now to be very strict in our walking with God, that we may give up our account with joy. Then my end is answered, then I hope the blessing of God will attend you all. So I will end with the words of the wise man, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God, and keep his Commandments, this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

J. T.

WHEN people fall into temptation of any great sin, they should always take this along with them—How can I do this great wickedness and sin against my God? as Joseph said to his mistress.

ALSO, what is it that God requires of thee, but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God?

RELIGION, in my opinion, is properly that awful reverence and pure worship that is due to the Supreme Author of all Beings called God, that made man a little lower than the angels, before man fell.

Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might ; let not the rich man glory in his riches : and this is the very admonition of God himself ; that we should not in the least place our hope and confidence upon the best of worldly things, but only upon God Almighty, who is alone able to save and defend us. Jeremiah, chap. ix. verse 28.

And who is he that will harm ye, if ye be followers of that which is good ?

1 Peter, chap. iii. verse 18.

A PRAYER IN THE TIME OF WAR.

BUT above all, let us give glory to God, whose divine providence is our greatest safety and security. Oh ! let us bless and magnify his holy name, glorify him by a holy life and conversation, beseeching him to give us grace to make such a religious improvement of all his mercies, that he may still delight to do us good, and cause our enemies to fly before us, till at length, he shall bless us with a lasting and honorable and happy peace ; and let all true Britons say, Amen. Amen.

Postscript.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE conclusion of the whole is, that God has blessed this country beyond all others : We have the best religion, the best form of government, and the most plentiful land, of any people upon earth ; but we have made such bad use of these blessings, that we are in great danger of losing them : we neglect God, his service, and his day. We call ourselves christians, but we hardly know what the word means. Few consider, that every man, who says he is a christian, says as follows :— I am the soldier and servant of Jesus Christ, I have renounced all sin and wickedness, and all the vanities of this world ; I have owned that I am a sinner, and that I can only be saved by the merits and sufferings of Jesus Christ ; and in order to receive the benefits of these, I must repent of my sins, I must believe in Jesus Christ, and I must do what he has commanded. His commands are contained in the gospel, I must therefore read them, in order to learn my duty, and when I have learned it I must do it faithfully and diligently : Oh ! my countrymen, If we would do this, we should be safe, and happy, and prosperous ; God would make an hedge about us, and about all we have, and defend us from all our enemies. Look down, O God of all mercy, on this land : open our eyes, that we may see thy judgments hanging over our heads, and ready to fall upon us ; give us a just sense of our guilt, and grace to amend our lives, and let our timely repentance make us fit objects of thy mercy, and prevent the destruction of our nation. God bless his Majesty King George, the Queen, and all the Royal Family, with long life and peace, and give true wisdom to all those who have any share in the Government of our country, that they may see and know, that neither our own arm, nor our own devices, can save us ; and may learn to look up to thee, O God of Hosts, for thine almighty aid, that we may be humble and peaceable, sober and diligent, just and merciful, pious towards thee our God, loyal to our King, obedient to our governors, respectful to our superiors, and kind and affectionate to all men. That being protected by the Almighty power, we may pass our time here in peace and comfort, and be made partakers hereafter of eternal happiness, through the merits and intercession of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and I hope every true Briton will say, Amen.

THE END.

